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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Dir 188

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, TUESDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 11, 1962, 12:42 p.m.

MR. REAP: I am sorry to be late.

Jim is now giving you Press Release No. 547, which is the statement by Mr. Gardner before the Committee on Science and Astronautics of the House.

That is all that I have.

Q Joe, does the State Department have any response or comment of any kind to the statement out of Moscow today from Premier Khrushchev on Cuba?

A Well, I have noticed on the ticker that the Secretary has said something up on the Hill. I don't have the transcript of what was said. But for my comment here, the Department has not yet had an opportunity to study the lengthy statement issued this morning by TASS, apparently on the authority of the Soviet Government.

A cursory reading, however--

Q Just a minute, Joe.

A From a cursory reading, I should say--from a cursory reading, however, the statement contains a great deal of obvious propaganda frequently made before by the USSR about the US policy on Cuba and other matters.

Regarding Cuba--

Q Is that in the same sentence? "And other matters" period?

A And other matters, period. Regarding Cuba, the policy of the United States remains as stated by the White House on September 4.

I have here--I have only one copy of this, but it is in effect a catalogue of principal Soviet public statements on Cuba, warning that Soviet rockets can protect Cuba.

Q Got dates on these?

A Yes, the dates are here. I will make this available to you. I think it's too long to run through.

Q Do you have a date on that particular rocket-warning one, Joe?

A The first one is a Kremlin speech by Mr. Khrushchev, July 9, 1960, in which he was commenting on planned US cancellation of sugar purchases from Cuba.

Q How many have you got there?

A There are about six pages of them, five pages of them. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen--there appear to be fifteen different items.

Q What do they all have in common? Do they

mention rocket threats?

A This first one dealt with the rocket threat. The second one is an interview, a Khrushchev interview with the Director of the Cuban newspaper, Revolucion.

There is a statement by the Soviet representative in the General Assembly Committee, some Khrushchev letters, Khrushchev-Yerevan speech, Khrushchev interview with Sulzberger, more of the same, a Soviet Government statement following the Punta del Este meeting, Soviet Deputy Premier Kozlov's speech at a Cuban Embassy reception.

Q What is the purpose of this recital?

A --Soviet-Cuban communiqué.

Q What is the purpose of this recital?

A What it amounts to is that what he has said this morning is not new. They have said all of this before.

Q Joe, all these different items--do they all deal with the general theme of Soviet protection for Cuba against an attack, or is that what they have in common?

A I think this is a fair--shall I give you the headings?

Q I think we can look at that later, Joe.

A There are two on rocket-warnings, one an offer to provide any assistance, the Soviets seek military bases in Cuba.

Q What was that second one?

A The second one here is Soviet rocket warning attenuated; that is the interview with the Cuban editor.

Why don't I just make--I will have this available. Unfortunately, I only have one copy.

Q What was the statement of September 4th from the White House? Is that a news conference?

Q Congressional leaders.

A That was the Monday night--it came out, or Tuesday night.

Q Joe, somebody--I don't know whether or not it was Khrushchev--also said in a statement today that the United States were unable to go on with discussions about Berlin because of the approach of the Congressional elections. Do you have any comment on this?

A No. I have seen that, but I have no comment. And as for the balance of that, as I say, there is nothing really new on it.

Q Joe, is it correct that we can't negotiate on Berlin because of the approaching election?

A That is utter nonsense.

Q Utter nonsense?

A Utter nonsense; yes.

Q Do you have any comment on the Castro charges that pirate ships have fired on freighters going to Cuba?

A Well, I have heard that report. I heard it on the radio this morning. But we have no information in the Department about it.

Q Is there an inquiry under way?

A Well, if by "inquiry," are we asking around to see if anyone knows anything about it, yes.

Q Joe, also, do you know of any prospective discussions between the Secretary and Ambassador Dobrynin?

A No.

Q Joe, has the United States made clear to the Soviet Government that it is prepared to go on with the talks on Berlin?

A The talks on Berlin?

Q That is what the statement was about.

A John, a number of times we have asked the Soviets about this--I have told you here of at least four proposals we have made to the Soviets on Berlin, all of which have been turned down.

Q Well, you are talking about the more parochial question of the incidents in Berlin and having a meeting of the representatives there, aren't you?

A Yes.

Q Khrushchev seemed to be referring to the broader question of talks concerning the settlement of the entire Berlin question.

A Berlin and Germany, etc.

Q Yes. Have we told him recently that we are prepared to go on with those, so that he shouldn't have any feeling such as he apparently has?

A I don't know, Stu. I don't know if we have done that.

Q Were these talks ever interrupted, Joe? Rusk met with Dobrynin only--oh, when? Two weeks ago was the last time. Then we were told it was another meeting in a series. The talks will continue?

A That is my understanding, yes.

Q These talks will be discontinued now until after the election?

A No. [Laughter] No.

Q Nothing we have done would be any indication that we are prepared--that we are going to break these talks off?

A No.

Q Do you have any comment on the demise of

Dr. Soblen?

A No, that just closes that case.

Q Do you have any comment on charges of a Venezuelan sulphur corporation that the Venezuelan Government has expropriated it and refused to pay adequate compensation?

A I am afraid what I have is not very much. No, we just don't have enough reports on it to make any comment.

Q Joe, you seem to have quite a sheaf of papers there. Are we neglecting to ask some pertinent questions?

A No.

Q Are you in a position to add--

A Not really.

Q Are you in a position to add anything to last night's announcement about resumption of testing?

A No, that was done by AEC and DOD, I think.

Q Joe, back to the Cuban thing, you dismissed this statement on initial reading as "obvious propaganda" that they have made before. Of course, this time that it's made, it's made within the context of a situation where there has been a considerable military build-up down there. What significance do you attach to the timing of this statement?

A I think I will stand by what I have said. I think the Secretary's comments on the Hill are probably more pertinent to that question, as to--

Q Joe, has the State Department approved an export license for another replacement U-2 to Nationalist China?

[Laughter]

Q If you are going to sell them, you have to service them, boy.

[Laughter]

A I think yesterday I said, Spence, that I would no more discuss U-2s or any aspect of them. That statement still stands.

Q Thank you, Joe.

[The meeting was adjourned at  
12:55 p.m.]

[ECRichard]